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EAST EUROPE BRANCH NOTES

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ROMANIA

Support for Portuguese Changes

Romanian media, usually vociferously critical of Portugal, have favorably and extensively commented on events in Lisbon since the coup. For instance, Bucharest Mayor Cioara at the main May Day rally gave a "warm salute to the Portuguese people, to the democratic and progressive forces in the country, and to the armed forces," and party/state leader Ceausescu has also made a positive but cautious evaluation of the coup.

Romania's growing interest in the Third World has, in recent years, probably caused Bucharest to become a particularly loud critic of Lisbon's colonial policies. The Romanians have also become a significant supporter of the various African "liberation" movements (both in propaganda and in materiel). In fact, Ceausescu attacked Portuguese policies so sharply during his speech at last month's meeting of the UN Economic Commission for Europe in Bucharest that the Portuguese delegation walked out. Although Romania can be expected to maintain its position on independence for the African territories, it is clearly pleased with the coup. Bucharest's next step may well be to establish commercial and diplomatic relations with the new regime.

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